

Draft Master Plan Summary of Public Meeting and Public Comments Totogatic River Wildlife Area

A public open house to review the Totogatic Wildlife Area draft master plan was held November 6th, 2017 from 4-7pm at the Hayward High School. Approximately 30 members of the public attended. DNR staff from wildlife, forestry, fisheries, water quality, planning, and engineering were present to answer questions about the draft master plan. A powerpoint presentation on the background and timeline of the property was available. Printed property maps on property boundaries, land cover and recreational features were posted for viewing and comment.

Public comment period: October 24- November 21st, 2017

Paper copy surveys/email/letters received during comment period: 12

Online Surveys received: comment period 19

Of the comments received, 8 the supported construction of a new dam, 13 supported the maintenance of the existing structure, 6 requested the dam to be abandoned or removed, and 4 comments were neutral.

Most survey respondents were from the public that live near the Totogatic Wildlife Area. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) commented via email that they support the recommendations in the plan. The FWS administers the funding and program coordination for the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act.

Comments regarding management suggestions varied and included: desire to replace or maintain dam, comments that support the ability to fluctuate water levels on a new dam or dam repair, requests to increase habitat for woodcock on upland forested areas, a clarification that fishing is the main use of the property now, motorized boat access questions, thoughts on wild rice planting after dam is removed, and comments on fisheries, waterfowl hunting, and recreational use changes after dam removal. Comments were shared about restoring the channel to its former state and creating more miles of designated wild river. A request was made to edit the plan language to ensure hand-pulling of invasive plants is included in addition to limited herbicide use.

Funding ideas for property maintenance included: a regional partnership or friends group, Pittman Robinson funds, financing the dam rebuild, having residents contribute to the Totogatic improvement fund, use money from waterfowl stamps and increased user fees, get money from town and/ or county, form a partnership with Ducks Unlimited, WI Waterfowl Association, legislative solution, increased usage or access fee for the property.

